

****ATTENTION****

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Thinking Globally and Locally

It's being called Earth Summit.

On June 3, scores of delegates from around the globe will meet in Rio de Janeiro for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

During the 10-day conference, delegates are expected to seek solutions to a number of environmental challenges, including how to manage our forests wisely, protect our oceans, control toxic wastes, curb bad industrial practices and preserve the world's remaining animal and plant species.

The conference should give everyone a chance to talk about the condition of our world's natural resources. It should also give the people of Washington a chance to talk about the condition of their state's own natural resources, including wildlife.

Here are some global and local facts and figures about our natural resources. Numbers by no means tell the entire story, but they do tell an important part of it.

Globally

Within the next four decades, the earth's population is expected to double to about 11 billion people.

In the last two decades, the world's population mushroomed 66 percent.

More than 70 percent of the world's resources are consumed by one quarter of the globe's people.

The United States and six other industrial countries are responsible for 45 percent of human-caused greenhouse gas emissions.

Locally

Washington's population grew by 734,000 people from 1980 to 1990. Washington is the smallest of 11 western states.

During that decade, two-thirds of the state's growth has been in unincorporated areas where wildlife habitat existed before the land was converted to other uses.

In 1991, there were 5,000,400 people residing in Washington, giving the state a population density of 75.1 people per square mile. Washington is the second most densely populated state in the west.

Globally

Since 1900, one-half of the forest cover of the developing world has disappeared.

Tropical forests are being destroyed at a rate of 42.5 million acres annually. An area of tropical forest larger than the state of Florida is destroyed each year.

At least 25 billion tons of topsoil are lost to erosion each year.

Locally

An estimated 30,000 acres of wildlife habitat is converted to other uses each year in Washington. That represents an area the size of Spokane.

Since Washington was settled, nearly 90 percent of its wetlands have been degraded. About 50 percent have been lost outright. Wetlands are vitally important nurseries for fish and wildlife. About 85 percent of our state's animal species use wetlands and their buffer areas for breeding and feeding.

In the last 17 years, about 16,000

permits have been issued for development along our shorelines - areas that are critical for wildlife habitat. Nearly 12,000 of those permits have been issued for substantial development. In 1990, 1,346 permits were issued, 60 percent more than were issued in 1980.

Globally

100 to 300 species become extinct every 24 hours.

One quarter of the earth's species could face extinction within the next three decades because of human activity.

Half of the plants, animals and microbes on Earth are in rain forests.

Habitat destruction could cause 10 to 22 percent of rain forest species to become extinct within the next three decades.

Locally

Washington has 22 endangered fish and wildlife species. Five are nearly eliminated in the Washington portion of their range.

In addition, we have seven threatened species.

In 1991, 94 stocks or groups of stocks of salmon, steelhead and sea-run cutthroat were determined to be in trouble by the American Fisheries Society.

Fifty are considered to be at high risk.

The Department of Wildlife is concerned about the population status of 63 additional species.

